



Fact Sheet – Stage One Implementation of the Knight Review Changes to the Student Visa Program

Stage one of the Australian Government's response to the Strategic Review of the student visa program will be progressively being implemented before the end of 2011. The majority of these changes commenced on 5 November 2011 and are detailed below.

Reducing the financial requirements for some student visa applicants

From 5 November 2011, the government reduced the financial requirements for higher risk Assessment Level 3 and Assessment Level 4 student visa applicants. This would mean that students who are subject to Assessment Level 3 or Assessment Level 4 will need up to approximately AUD36 000 less in the bank when applying for a visa. Applicants for the non-university sector in particular will benefit from this change.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-vet-schools-non-award.pdf

The genuine temporary entrant requirement

From 5 November 2011, the government introduced a new genuine temporary entrant requirement for all student visa applicants. This requirement will help to reduce migration risk and maintain the integrity of the student visa program. Student visa applicants are assessed on whether their individual circumstances indicate that their main aim is for a temporary stay in Australia. Applicants seeking to exploit the student visa program, for example, those whose main purpose is to work, will have their applications refused. Student visa holders who have completed their studies and not obtained a further visa will be required to depart Australia.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-genuine-temporary-entrant.pdf

More flexible arrangements for English language study

The government has made English language study in Australia more accessible by removing the English language test requirements for higher risk Assessment Level 4 and above stand-alone English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) visa applicants. This change commenced on 5 November 2011.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-elicos.pdf

Other changes which commenced on 5 November 2011

- Increasing the visa period of all new Postgraduate Research (subclass 574) visa grants by six months to allow for interactive marking of a thesis.
See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-higher-degree-by-research.pdf
- Allowing prepaid fees for formal homestay arrangements through education providers to be included in the financial requirements assessment for a student visa.
See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-vet-schools-non-award.pdf

- Stopping the department's Pre-Visa Assessment (PVA) policy which requires education providers to receive a PVA letter from the department before they can issue a confirmation of enrolment to Assessment Level 3 and Assessment Level 4 students from outside Australia.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-visa-processing-improvements.pdf

Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC)

The first meeting of the EVCC was held on 26 October 2011. The EVCC provides a forum for ongoing engagement between the Australian Government and the international education sector regarding student visas. Future meetings are planned to be held quarterly.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/pdf/2011-evcc.pdf

Background

On 22 September 2011, the Australian Government announced its response to the Strategic Review of the Student Visa Program 2011 conducted by the Hon Michael Knight AO.

Mr Knight made 41 recommendations to enhance the quality, integrity and competitiveness of Australia's international education sector and improve the integrity of the student visa program. The government supports all of Mr Knight's recommendations with some modifications. A list of the 41 recommendations and their proposed implementation date, Mr Knight's report and the government's response to the report is available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) website.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/knight/

Further information

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on the department's website.

These FAQs will be updated with more information about the changes as they are progressively implemented.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/knight/